Color and overall printing quality

On the whole, the American public gives the daily newspaper high ratings on reproduction quality. Before asking respondents anything about newspaper color, they were first asked to rate the clarity of printing in their newspapers. 56% say that the printing of articles and pictures in the paper they read most often is "very clear," and an additional 37% rate it as "fairly clear."

Younger adults are more critical of the overall reproduction quality, as they are with regard to the quality of the color in their paper.

Table 7: Rating of Overall Reproduction Quality, by Age

	Total Adults	By Age <35	By Age 35+
Very clear	56%	50%	61%
Fairly clear	37	42	33
A little blurred	5	6	3
Very blurred	1	*	1
Don't know	1	1	2
	100%	100%	100%
Bases:	(1000)	(409)	(591)

* Less than .5%

Question: "Thinking about the paper you read most often, how clear is the printing of the articles and pictures?"

Newspaper people are aware that newspapers which upgrade their equipment, not only improve their color capacity and quality, they also improve the reproduction quality of their black and white. This survey shows that the nation's readers recognize the improved black and white reproduction that has accompanied the provision of color.

Readers who see color very frequently give higher ratings to the overall reproduction in their papers: 65% say the printing is very clear, compared with 53% of those who see color less than half the time.

Table 8: Overall Reproduction Rating, by Amount of Color They See

By: How often they see color:	Overall printing rated "very clear"
Almost every time	65%
About half the time	62%
Less than half	53%
Never see color	56%

An even closer correlation appears between how good they think the color is and how clear they find the printing. 78% of those who say the color is excellent say the printing is very clear, compared with only 33% of those who say the color is poor or very poor. This suggests not only that papers that do good color also do better black and white; it also suggests that the quality of the color affects their judgment of the overall quality of the printing.

Table 9: Overall Reproduction Rating, by Quality of the Color

By: How good the color is:	Overall printing rated "very clear"
Excellent	78%
Good	63%
So-so	44%
Poor, very poor	33%

How much color are they aware of?

Among those who reported reading a newspaper at least once a week, less than one-third said they see pictures, charts or ads in color "about half the time" or more often. 25% say they never see color in their daily newspaper.

Table 10: How Often Color is Seen

Almost every time I read	10%
About half the time	21
Less than half the time	44
Never	25
	100%
Base[a]	(890)

a) Excludes those who did not answer, and those who did not report reading a newspaper at least once a week.

How closely does this match the circulation figures for papers that are using color? NAB periodically conducts a questionnaire survey of all U.S. dailies, to obtain an inventory of their editorial contents. In 1983 the use of editorial color was reported for 86% of total daily circulation, and it can be assumed that the amount of color has increased since then. Furthermore, NAB's analysis of SRDS data on color offered to advertisers shows that papers representing 93% of total circulation offer at least one color in ROP.

Why, then, do only 75% of the nation's adult readers report being aware of color in their usual newspaper? To be sure, there are people who cannot discriminate among certain colors. But this short-fall in the number of readers who are aware of ROP color suggests that some papers still use so little color, that readers don't think of it as color.[1]

Table 11: How Much Color There Is, and How Much Readers See

Use of editorial color, 1983:	86% of circ.
Available ROP ad color, 1985:	93% of circ.
Awareness of ROP color, 1986:	75% of readers

1) This problem of awareness exists to a much greater extent among advertisers. In a 1984 survey of 400 advertising executives conducted by Neal Associates, for NAB, only 16% knew that almost all papers offer ROP full color.

Conclusion

This survey makes it clear that the public, like advertisers, wants ROP color. And the younger they are, the more they want color.

Not only do readers want color, they want it throughout the paper, not just in advertising.

But newspapers have a way to go to satisfy the nation's readers' color standards. One out of three adults are critical of the quality of the color they see. And the younger they are, the higher their standards.

The papers that give them more color receive higher ratings for color and overall reproduction quality. And the papers that give them better color are rated better for overall printing clarity.

In asking for more color, readers are sending the same message as advertisers.

* * * * * * *

The questionnaire was designed by Charles Lehman and Thelma Anderson of NAB's Research and Marketing/New Technology Departments. This report was written by Thelma Anderson.

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Daily Newspaper Page Opening:

Page and Sections Usually Read

Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc.
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DAILY NEWSPAPER PAGE OPENING:

PAGES AND SECTIONS USUALLY READ

Demographic Segments

SMRB SMM - 1986

This is one of a series of marketing research reports prepared by the Newspaper Advertising Bureau, Inc., as a service to the newspaper business and its advertisers.

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CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTORY NOTE	i

Types of Daily Newspaper Pages or Sections Usually Read by:	Table Number for: Adults	Males	Females
Total Average Weekday Audience	1	1	1
Age	2	3	4
Education	5	6	7
Household Income	8	9	10
Employment Status	11	12	13
Occupation	14	15	16
Marital Status	17	18	19
Number of People in Household	20	21	22
Locality Type	23	24	25
Census Region	26	27	28

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Measures of media exposure vary with the approach to measurement, whether the medium in question is print or broadcast. For this reason, users of media exposure figures should understand exactly how the data are collected.

The figures in this report are from the 1986 Simmons Study of Media and Markets. They were obtained in personal interviews with a multi-stage area probability sample of more than 19,000 adults. Every respondent who reported reading one or more daily newspapers within the past seven days was asked:

> "When you read or look into (NAME NEWSPAPER), do you generally read or look at every page of the entire newspaper, or do you tend to read or look at only some pages or sections?"

Those who say that they read or look at "only some pages or sections" were shown a card listing ten categories of content carried by the great majority of daily newspapers, as shown in the tables following, and asked:

> "Which of the numbers on this card describe the pages or sections in (NAME NEWSPAPER) you generally read or look at?"

The most important finding emerging from this approach is that more than six out of ten adult readers (63%)[1] indicate that they usually see every page of the newspaper they read. This does not mean that they read

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1) Research by Audits & Surveys, Inc. (1982) reported that 67% of adult readers go through the paper "page by page".

every item, but since the human eye is a very efficient scanning device, they have the opportunity to be exposed to any editorial or advertising content appearing in the issue.

In a 1982 study conducted by Audits & Surveys, Inc., a nationwide sample of adults was taken through sampled pages of newspapers read on the day before the interview. Findings from the A&S study suggest that the SMRB figures in the present report are roughly equivalent to "page opening". Overall, A&S estimated average page opening at 77%--that is, the average page (or spread) in a daily newspaper is opened by 77% of all those reading the issue.

For the minority who were directly questioned by SMRB's interviewers about specific kinds of content, the figures obtained represent a more rigorous measure of "readership". Those who wish to estimate how these more selective readers respond to particular kinds of content can do so by subtracting the percentage shown for "usually read every page" and then dividing by "read certain pages or sections".

EXAMPLE: In the first column of Table 1, the figure shown for "business, finance" is 76%. Subtracting the 63% who usually read every page leaves a remainder of 13%. Dividing this by the 37% who read only certain pages or sections yields 35%, the proportion of those specifically asked about "business, finance" who say that they usually read that page or section. The proportions for selective male (41%) and female (32%) readers indicate a larger difference between the sexes than the overall "readership" or "page opening" figure suggests.

Within any given demographic segment the figures shown in these tables may reasonably be assumed to show the relative level of interest in a specific kind of content. However, any differences found between demographic segments should be interpreted with caution, because the major factor in most of these differences is the percentage who report reading every page. For example, Table 2 might appear to suggest that adults who are 65 or older are just as interested in "entertainment" pages as young adults between 18 and 24. This is only because older readers are more likely to report reading every page.

The fairly constant level of page opening for "entertainment" content shown in these SMRB tables might be contrasted with one of the results of a card-sorting task in the 1982 A&S research. The 25 cards used included 21 kinds of editorial content and four kinds of ads. In response to this part of the survey 89% of all newspaper readers between 18 and 24 indicate that they usually read "movie ads", as compared with only 24% of those who are 65 or older. This pattern of higher interest in movie ads among young adults is consistent with other research on movie attendance.

Although different approaches to measuring the elusive concept called "readership" may yield very different results, divergent findings can be equally valuable so long as the user understands exactly how those results were obtained and what they imply.

In Tables 23 through 25, the percentages shown for "usually read every page" reflect the fact that most of the dailies read in central cities tend to have more pages than those read in non-metropolitan areas. Large central city newspapers also have more specialized pages and sections that may be designed to appeal to fairly narrow audience segments. The Audits and Surveys study cited earlier indicates that the average central city reader may open to more pages than the average non-metropolitan reader has in his entire newspaper.